

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-16 : (Canceled)

Claim 17 : (New) A communications system, comprising:

- a) a first network for communicating data according to a first protocol;
- b) a second network for communicating data according to a second protocol;
- c) each network including at least one node;
- d) a plurality of communication interfaces for providing communication between a first node of the first network and a second node of the second network, each interface including means for sending values to the first node for indicating availability of communication between that interface and the second node;
- e) selection means for selecting one of the interfaces for communicating the data between the first node and the second node based on the values sent by the interfaces to the first node;
- f) each interface including means for detecting the selection of the one interface, and means for modifying, on the selection of the selected one interface, the value sent to the first node; and
- g) the selection means including means for preferentially selecting the interface associated with the value modified by the modifying means.

Claim 18 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which each interface includes means for detecting an error condition, and means for preventing the sending of values by that interface upon detection of the error condition.

Claim 19 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which each interface includes means for sending the values as part of a message comprising an address representing the second node.

Claim 20 : (New) The communications system of claim 19, in which the address comprised in the message representing the same second node sent from each interface is the same.

Claim 21 : (New) The communications system of claim 19, in which the address is an internet protocol (IP) address which maps onto a network service access protocol (NSAP) address associated with the second network.

Claim 22 : (New) The communications system of claim 19, in which the address is a network service access protocol (NSAP) address which maps onto an internet protocol (IP) address associated with the second network.

Claim 23 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which the first protocol is TCP/IP, and in which the second protocol is ISO.

Claim 24 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which the first protocol is ISO, and in which the second protocol is TCP/IP.

Claim 25 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which the selection means includes means for avoiding usage of any interface from which it is not receiving the values.

Claim 26 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which each interface provides conversion between the first and second protocols.

Claim 27 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which the means for sending the values is arranged to send the values by means of the protocol for that network.

Claim 28 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which the protocols comprise a transport layer and a network layer, and in which the transport layer comprises means for controlling the values sent.

Claim 29 : (New) The communications system of claim 17, in which the protocols comprise routing metrics; and comprising means for sending the values via the routing metrics.

Claim 30 : (New) A method of communicating data between a first node in a first network and a second node in a second network by communicating the data in the first network according to a first protocol and by communicating the data in the second network according to a second protocol, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) providing communication between the first node and the second node by a plurality of communication interfaces;
- b) sending values from each interface to the first node indicating availability of communication between that interface and the second node;
- c) selecting one of the interfaces for communicating the data between the first and second nodes, based on the values sent by the interfaces to the first node;
- d) detecting the selection of the selected one interface;

e) modifying the value sent by the selected one interface to the first node;

and

f) preferentially selecting the interface sending the modified value.

Claim 31 : (New) The method of claim 30, in which the protocols comprise a transport layer and a network layer, and further comprising the step of controlling the values sent using the transport layer.

Claim 32 : (New) The method of claim 30, in which the protocols comprise routing metrics; and further comprising the step of sending the values using the routing metrics.